

REMARKS

Claims 2-6, 24-34, 36 and 38 are pending in the present application. Claims 24, 30, 36 and 38 have been amended. Claims 35 and 37 have been canceled.

Drawings

Applicant respectfully notes the Examiner's acceptance of the corrected formal drawings filed along with the Amendment dated July 17, 2003.

Claim Rejections-35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 2-6 and 24-34 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's admitted prior art, in view of the Doan et al. reference (U.S. Patent No. 5,946,595), the Besser et al. reference (U.S. Patent No. 6,165,903) and the Xiang et al. reference (U.S. Patent No. 6,015,752). This rejection, insofar as it may pertain to the presently pending claims, is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

A feature of the preferred embodiments of the present application is that a silicide layer is formed in a first rapid thermal anneal (RTA) process, the silicide layer is masked with a silicon layer, and then a second RTA process is carried out whereby the silicon layer provides the amount of silicon contained in the silicide layer of the processed structure. The embodiments of the present application as claimed are used in connection with an SOI substrate, in which a silicon layer is formed on a BOX

insulation layer.

That is, claim 24 includes in combination "providing a semiconductor substrate which has a silicon region located on an insulating layer formed in the semiconductor substrate", wherein "a thickness of the silicon region is in a range of 50-100 nm". Claim 30 includes in combination "providing a field oxide layer and a silicon on insulator layer on the buried oxide layer", wherein "a thickness of the silicon on insulator layer is in a range of 50-100 nm".

In view of the use of the supplemental silicon layer, generation of voids in the substrate can be reduced. The embodiments of the present application are therefore especially useful in connection with an SOI substrate having a thin silicon layer, within the range of 50-100 nm, as specifically featured in independent claims 24 and 30.

Applicant respectfully notes that of the prior art as relied upon in the above noted rejection, only Applicant's admitted prior art as described with respect to Figs. 1A-1C is directed to an SOI structure. However, a supplemental silicon layer is not used in connection with Applicant's admitted prior art. Accordingly, a device including a thin SOI layer with irregular thickness manufactured as in Applicant's admitted prior art, will include thinner parts of the SOI layer that may be sacrificed entirely to create voids.

Applicant respectfully emphasizes that the various secondary references as relied upon by the Examiner do not teach SOI structures. Particularly, the Besser et al. reference includes a device formed on silicon substrate 30. That is, the secondary references are not concerned with preventing consumption of an SOI layer of a

thickness in a range of 50-100 nm that has limited silicon available for an RTA process, because the structures of the secondary references are formed on substrates.

With regard to previously pending claims 35 and 37, the Examiner has asserted that the Besser et al. reference discloses in column 5, lines 30-35 a thickness range that meets these features as now presented in independent claims 24 and 30.

However, this portion of the Besser et al. reference as specifically relied upon by the Examiner discloses a thickness range of silicon layer 46 as illustrated in Fig. 7 thereof, not the thickness of an underlying SOI layer. Thus, it should be understood that the Besser et al. reference is not concerned with preventing consumption of an underlying SOI layer so as to avoid formation of voids therein, as in the present invention.

Applicant therefore respectfully submits that the respective methods for fabricating a semiconductor device of claims 24 and 30 would not have been obvious in view of the prior art as relied upon by the Examiner taken singularly or together, and that this rejection of claims 2-6, 24-34, 36 and 38 is improper for at least these reasons.

Conclusion

Claims 24 and 30 have been respectively amended to include the features of dependent claims 35 and 37. Since claims 35 and 37 have already been examined, entry and consideration of this Amendment should not raise new issues and should not be an undue burden. The Examiner is thus respectfully requested to enter this Amendment. Also for these reasons, this Amendment should not be construed as

narrowing scope within the meaning of *Festo*.

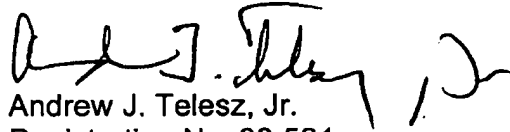
The Examiner is also respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the corresponding rejection, and to pass the claims of the present application to issue, for at least the above reasons.

In the event that there are any outstanding matters remaining in the present application, please contact Andrew J. Telesz, Jr. (Reg. No. 33,581) at (703) 715-0870 in the Washington, D.C. area, to discuss these matters.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0238 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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